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Bangalore Mirror

TEMP Max 34 | Min 21 | Humidity 70% Partly cloudy sky Sensex 75,273 | Nifty 23,306 | Gold 1,46,890 | Silver 2,50,100 | Dollar 93.98 | Euro 108.02 | GBP 125.76

Move it

CITY PAGE 6

Traffic congestion, infra needs on citizens' minds as 5 newly-constituted corporations set to present their individual budgets for 2026–27

Identity crisis

CITY PAGE 7

Activists, concerned citizens to continue protests, present their case to President after amended Transgender Rights Bill creates widespread unease

1,068 cases registered for refusal to ply, 942 for overcharging: Auto drivers in city continue to face flak over two common undesirable traits, with elderly who don't use apps and newcomers being most gullible victims

GO BY METER? NO CAN DO

Social media is alive with debates over whether non-locals get raw end of the deal

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The persistent issue of autorickshaw drivers refusing passengers or demanding excess fare continues to trouble commuters everyday in the city, with enforcement data indicating a steady rise in such violations over the past few years. In the first two months of 2026, as many as 1,068 cases were registered for refusal to ply and 942 for overcharging. Senior citizens remain among the most affected, as many find it difficult to book autos. The auto union president noted that instances of drivers demanding extra fare are particularly common during night hours.

The number of cases has shown a consistent upward trend: In 2025, a total of 4,669 cases were booked against errant drivers, a big jump from the 3,138 cases of 2024. The figures were lower in earlier years, with 1,537 cases in 2023.

Traffic officials said that refusal to accept passengers, particularly for short distances or less-profitable routes, continues to be one of the most frequent complaints against auto rickshaw drivers. Police officials added that since very few commuters come forward to formally lodge complaints, teams conduct special drives by deploying

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4 »

> **Auto drivers are reportedly being charged ₹20–30 extra at gas stations, which is leading to refusal of short-distance rides or the extra cost being passed on to passengers. We have decided to submit a complaint to the traffic authorities and the government regarding this issue**
>
> —M Manjunath, Auto and Taxi Drivers' Union president

INSIDE» PG 5 Reel scary rides

SLOWLY, SLOWLY CATCH A MONKEY

Wildlife experts advise citizens to stop feeding wildlife after monkeys take up residence in housing societies

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It is not just the sizzling days that are troubling Bengalureans. There are monkeys on the loose, too.

The forest department of Greater Bengaluru Authority has been receiving recurring complaints of monkeys entering residential societies and apartment complexes across the city.

A social media post of a monkey stuck in a residential luxury villa and apartment society in Whitefield grabbed many eyeballs on Thursday.

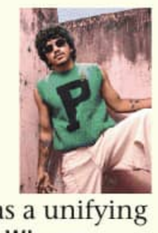
A social media user posted that the monkey has been in the same building for the past 10 days. The post also clarified that, although residents made multiple attempts to contact the forest department over the last 10 days, help arrived only on Thursday, and a monkey rescue was underway by officials of the Karnataka Forest Department.

In another case in Electronic City, a monkey has been living in a residential society for more than

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 »

THINGS TO DO

01 Let the music flow



+91 Live: Sound Without Conflict features a dynamic lineup with Paal Dabba, Sanjit Hegde, and headliner King. The non-profit, youth-led cultural movement, celebrates music as a unifying force across diverse genres and voices. **Where: Bhartiya Mall of Bengaluru; When: 4 pm to 10 pm**

02 Book-ed for fun

Atta Galatta is presenting an interactive dramatic reading by Venkataraghavan, where the author brings his story to life by performing it as a lively play. The story follows Brachio, a very tall beach dweller who loves helping people, but must confront what happens when the villagers no longer need him. **Where: Atta Galatta, Indiranagar; When: March 29, 1.30 pm**

03 Emotions on canvas

Aalekh Arts & Culture Foundation is hosting an art fundraiser titled 'Shades of Grey', bringing together a series of evocative oil-on-canvas works exploring the nuanced emotional spectrum of women through atmospheric landscapes rendered in tonal greys, textures, and shifting horizons. **Where: Sabha Gallery; When: Until March 28**

04 Techno time

SOCIAL celebrates the Oddvision 2nd Year Anniversary, blending techno-driven beats, layered rhythms, and intricate electronic textures, with flowing patterns defining the dynamic, immersive atmosphere. **Where: Indiranagar SOCIAL; When: March 27, 8 pm**

05 Musical delight

The Nadathur Foundation is organising the 5th edition of Nada Sambhrama, a concert series dedicated to promoting and celebrating the rich tradition of Indian classical music. This edition represents an enchanting evening of Hindustani music featuring Vidhushi Shubha Mudgal. **Where: Mangala Mandapa Auditorium, NMKRV Campus; When: March 28, 6.30 pm**

Women do all the heavy lifting here

Fitness initiative brings together women from diverse backgrounds to embrace strength training through shared lifting experiences, reshaping narratives of female fitness

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Inset: Anusha Mendosa (23) and Jhanvi More (22), founders of Girls Gym Club

At the Girls Gym Club, strength knows no age. Picture a 70 year old woman attempting her first deadlift, cheered on by gym enthusiasts and working mothers alike. Far from a fleeting viral reel, this moment captures the essence of a growing movement, one that champions strength training for women at every stage of life.

The Girls Gym Club has been hosting events that draw hundreds of women, creating a space where friendships are forged through shared lifting experiences. Led by a dynamic Gen Z duo, co founders Anusha Mendosa, a 23 year old MBA student and marketing strategist, and Jhanvi More, a 22 year old certified trainer, the initiative is reshaping the narrative of women's fitness. What began as an Instagram inspiration in 2024 has rapidly evolved into a movement, bringing together women from diverse backgrounds to embrace strength training, a discipline long underestimated but now recognised for its transformative potential.

The club's beginner friendly lifting events are drawing packed audiences across major cities including Hyderabad, Mumbai, Pune, Delhi, and Bengaluru, with plans underway to expand further into Pune and the North East. "Bengaluru has become our largest community compared to our home turf in Mumbai. Women here show up eager to lift and learn," said co-founder Anusha.

The inception of this digital initiative stemmed from Anusha and Jhanvi's personal struggles with understanding PCOD and PCOS, alongside their own battles with body image, experiences of body shaming, and the awkward transition from treadmill to squat rack, reflections that ultimately shaped their decision to embark on this venture.

"Weightlifting can help fix weight loss problems, help gain and maintain strength, help with hormonal issues and boost metabolism, which is a gamechanger for women in today's time," said Jhanvi, who completed her Bachelor's degree in Sports Management and later pursued NASM certifications as a Certified Personal Trainer (CPT) and Certified Nutrition Coach (CNC), and now guides women with a scientific approach to lifting and nutrition.

One of their events, held on March 8 in Bengaluru, brought together first time lifters and seasoned participants, each encouraging the other to push harder. It began with guidance on proper form, breathing techniques, and the importance of avoiding ego lifting, with practice stations set up before the finale, a 'Lifting Party' focused on achieving personal records. The founders noted that participants were not only enthusiastic but also felt safe, which allowed them to gain confidence and concentrate on setting new records without injury.

At one event, 43 year old Payal Chauhan attended with her 70 year old mother Anita. Despite battling a cold, Anita stole the show with her first ever deadlift, cheered on by her daughter and a crowd of women celebrating the milestone. "I still can't believe at 70, I did those intimidating deadlifts. I walked in nervous, but there was no reason to be, it was just us girls. I felt prouder and stronger, a feeling every woman should experience one and many times in her life," said Anita.

Despite juggling college exams, a marketing agency, and event planning, founders Anusha and Jhanvi built the Girls Gym Club from scratch, driven by grit, careful logistics, and a focus on genuine community over algorithms. Their Instagram initiative quickly grew into a movement, resonating with women across India and beyond.

The founders emphasised that participants now recognise strength training not as something to fear, but as a long term goal to embrace.

AIM holds South India incubator conclave in Bengaluru

The Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog, held the 'AIM SUMVAAD: South Chapter' conclave on March 23–24 at Whitefield, Bengaluru, with participation from incubators, state startup bodies, industry representatives and academic institutions from southern states and Puducherry. The event focused on incubator operations, regional coordination and startup ecosystem development. Day 1 included workshops on intellectual property, commercialisation, sustainability and workforce development. On Day 2, the AIM Tamil Nadu Incubation Consortium was launched with participation from multiple incubators.

A roundtable led by Mission Director Dr Deepak Bagla discussed the need to focus on capability building, talent, industry partnerships and long-term models. "There is a need to move from infrastructure focus to capability-based systems," he said. He also said collaboration among incubators and stakeholders is required to strengthen regional ecosystems. The event was attended by representatives from Startup TN, Telangana State Innovation Council, Kerala Startup Mission, STPI, DST, DBT and other organisations.

— BMB

Private educational institutions protest 'unfair' water charges and commercial classification

Private educational institutions have raised strong objections to multiple classifications and steep water tariffs imposed by the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB), stating that these measures are placing severe financial pressure on schools and indirectly burdening parents and students. KAMS General Secretary D Shashi Kumar said, "A review of billing records shows that educational institutions have been unfairly categorised under commercial slabs, resulting in excessive and irrational charges. Schools are currently divided into categories such as private schools and coaching centres charged Rs 2,500 per month, and CBSE, ICSE and international schools charged Rs 5,000 per month; which is discriminatory and based on the incorrect assumption that such schools operate as profit-driven entities." He also claimed that this violates constitutional rights, including the right to equality and the right to education.

Institutions have further flagged several hidden and escalating charges in the billing system, including sewerage fees, Greater Bengaluru charges, commercial pro-rata fees, usage-based surcharges, monthly penalties and fines for lack of occupancy certificates, leading to inflated bills. They allege unequal treatment compared to government schools despite serving economically weaker sections and maintaining relatively moderate fee structures. According to them, the policy promotes indirect commercialisation of education by increasing operational costs and forcing fee hikes, ultimately affecting parents and limiting access for students. The institutions have demanded immediate withdrawal of commercial classification, introduction of a unified "educational" tariff category, removal of discrimination among school types, elimination of hidden charges and implementation of transparent billing, along with concessions for schools serving underprivileged communities. Kumar urged authorities to intervene, stressing that education is a fundamental right and social responsibility, not a commercial activity.

— BMB

End of the road for buses without fire safeguards

Strict action ahead for bus operators if March 31 deadline to execute fire safety measures is not met

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Despite repeated warnings from the Transport Department, a majority of private bus owners in the state continue to ignore critical fire safety norms, putting passenger lives at serious risk. Officials estimate that nearly 90 per cent of sleeper coaches and air-conditioned buses lack adequate fire safety systems. In response, authorities have now set March 31 as the final deadline for compliance, failing which strict action will be initiated. The continued negligence has raised alarm, especially in the wake of recurring fire accidents involving private buses, many of which have resulted in tragic loss of lives. "If safety measures are not installed by March 31, fitness certificates will not be renewed and cancellation of permits will be recommended," a senior Transport Department official warned.

Recent incidents have underscored the urgency of the issue. On December 25, 2025, a devastating bus fire on the Chitradurga highway claimed 17 lives, with passengers trapped and burnt alive. Barely a month later, on January 28, 2026, another private bus was completely gutted in a fire accident in Shivamogga, though passengers narrowly escaped. Following these incidents, the department inspected 1,195 private buses across the state and found that 1,061 of them had failed to comply with fire safety guidelines. Notices have since been issued to the operators. "Most fire-related fatalities in bus accidents have occurred in sleeper coaches, which is why they are often referred to as 'moving coffins'," an official noted, highlighting the severity of the situation.

Recent incidents of bus fires have underscored urgency of the issue

Sources say design flaws in sleeper buses, including cramped interiors, flammable materials, inadequate emergency exits, lack of extinguishers, and automatic door failures significantly increase fire risk

Sources said that the design flaws of sleeper buses significantly contribute to the risk. Limited space for movement inside the bus, use of highly flammable materials in interiors, lack of proper emergency exits, absence of fire extinguishers, and automatic door failures during electrical short circuits have all been identified as major hazards. Additionally, inadequate training of staff in handling emergencies further worsens the situation. In contrast, government-run buses are comparatively safer, equipped with fire-resistant systems, first-aid kits and GPS tracking. Many buses operated by the state transport corporation are fitted with panic buttons, rear-view cameras, emergency exit doors and hammers to break windows during emergencies.

Earlier, based on recommendations by national authorities and central guidelines, bus operators were instructed to implement fire safety measures by February 28. However, due to poor compliance, the deadline has now been extended to March 31. Authorities have made it clear that there will be no further relaxation. "Passenger safety cannot be compromised under any circumstances. Bus owners must act immediately or face stringent consequences," the official added.

Rapid action helps contain forest fire

A fire broke out at Turahalli Forest near Thalaghattapura in Bengaluru South on March 25, 2026, at around 8 pm. Forest Department officials rushed to the spot, where four personnel began managing the blaze using blowers. With open terrain and no water sources available, the Fire Department was contacted, and two vehicles were deployed at around 8.30 pm to assist in dousing the flames. District Fire Officer Manjunath B said, "The fire broke out due to extreme dry weather. Our team was able to manage the fire, as the roaring flames were very close to residential complexes and posed a threat to wildlife." The Forest Department, along with the Fire Department, extinguished the blaze by 11.28 pm. Officials confirmed that no casualties or injuries were reported. **–BMB**

Ambulance driver caught intoxicated

The Sadashivanagar traffic police have booked an ambulance driver for allegedly driving under the influence of alcohol and flouting traffic norms on New BEL Road on Thursday afternoon. The accused has been identified as Darshan (29). The vehicle was reportedly being driven on the wrong side of a one-way road with its emergency lights on, even though there was no emergency situation. Traffic personnel, alerted by the suspicious movement amid heavy traffic, intercepted the ambulance. Upon inspection, they found only the driver inside, with no patient on board. Suspecting drunken driving, the police detained the driver. A test confirmed that the driver had consumed alcohol. Further investigation is underway. **–BMB**

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Broken railings and cracked pillars make footpath unsafe for citizens

Damaged railings, cracked compound pillars and poor maintenance along service road footpath raise safety concerns for pedestrians near Sangolli Rayanna Junction

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(1) Cracked concrete pillar poses danger to unsuspecting pedestrians; (2) Neglected BDA-installed railings turn unsafe for public ; (3) Missing safety railings on service road footpath pose risk ; (4) Badly damaged footpath beside service road near Anand Rao Circle

Footpath is meant for pedestrians to walk without any hassles. Railings are designed to create a physical barrier between footpath and vehicular traffic. And pillars between railings on a compound wall are supposed to provide structural support and aesthetic look. If the condition of the footpath along the service road between Kranti veera Sangolli Rayanna Junction and Anand Rao Circle is anything to go by, the footpath with broken tiles, rusted railings and cracked concrete pillars is set to pose danger to pedestrians instead of ensuring safety.

Though a major portion of the footpath remains in good condition, the rusted and broken safety railings are not only an eyesore but also a hazard. "I am aware of the then BBMP developing the footpath by laying new tiles to enhance the aesthetics. The authorities did not take measures to replace the rusted safety railings installed by the Bangalore Development Authority many years ago. The rusted railings have to be replaced with new ones to ensure aesthetics on par with other roads in the area," said Ganesh P, a pedestrian. Blaming the authorities for failing to replace the broken railings, Subash Chandra T, another pedestrian, said the rusted structures have become both an eyesore and a nuisance. "I don't think the authorities need much money to replace these railings. It seems they do not have any concern for the pedestrian's plight," he said.

The broken pillar on the compound wall along the footpath has the potential to replicate the unfortunate incident that claimed the life of Sanjana Singh in June 2010, when a compound wall of the Veterinary Medical College collapsed. "Most pillars on the compound have developed cracks and may fall on the footpath soon. I am of the opinion that the authorities have to take measures to reconstruct these pillars that have the potential to become dangerous to pedestrians. It will be useful if the authorities complete the work before the onset of the monsoon," said Girish Kumar S, a pedestrian.

Coming down heavily on the authorities for neglecting the rusted railings, David P, a pedestrian, suggested reducing the width of the footpath to increase the service road carriageway and ease traffic congestion. "The service road is known for traffic jams. I want the authorities to increase the width of the service road by reducing the width of the footpath," he said. The executive engineer (Gandhinagar) was not available for comment.

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Water leakage

Horamavu

Cauvery water leakage near Gandhi statue on Horamavu Street is wasting water and damaging the road, residents urge BWSSB to fix it urgently.

Garbage pile

Sahakaranagar

Garbage piled on the footpath at 14th Main, Park Road, A Block, Sahakaranagar opposite Ganga Bakery is causing inconvenience to pedestrians.

Fare is unfair when auto drivers don't play by rules

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

personnel in plainclothes, posing as passengers. Drivers found violating rules during these checks are booked on the spot. The traffic police carry out such operations at high-footfall locations, including Majestic, KR Puram, and Metro stations.

Commuters have frequently voiced frustration over the issue, alleging inconvenience, delays, and in some cases, being forced to pay higher fares through alternative means such as booking ride-based apps. Auto and Taxi Drivers' Union president M Manjunath said, "We have received complaints that some auto drivers are demanding extra charges over the fare shown on ride-hailing apps, often citing night-time rates. While many commuters rely on these apps, elderly passengers unfamiliar with them are more vulnerable to such harassment. Additionally, auto drivers are reportedly being charged ₹20–30 extra at gas stations, which is leading to refusal of short-distance rides or the extra cost being passed on to passengers. We have decided to submit a complaint to the traffic authorities and the government regarding this issue."

A senior citizen Alexander James told BM about the problems his friends and he have faced. "More than drivers refusing us, we are forced to refuse them because of the fares they demand. I have seen my friends who find it difficult to book autos on apps. We ask them how much it costs, but they harass us by demanding a lot of money. They go by a mouth meter rather than the actual meter. I usually depend on BMTC buses or the Metro which feels safe also. But for just 1 km, they ask ₹100 to ₹150 when it should cost around ₹50. It is a daily struggle to find an auto willing to go by the meter. Many drivers either refuse outright or demand extra fare," he added. "Bengaluru has many visitors, including people from rural areas. When they arrive at bus stands and approach autos, they are often overcharged. It's not just senior citizens, even newcomers to the city are taken advantage of," he said.

Another senior citizen near BTM bus stand shared his experience, "I usually rely on buses for my daily commute and use a basic keypad phone, so booking app-based autos is not an option for me. Whenever I approach autos directly, drivers often demand higher fares. My son supports me financially as I am not working, so spending extra on travel becomes a burden. There have also been instances where drivers speak rudely or refuse to take me to nearby places when I bargain. For people like me, finding a fair and reliable auto ride has become difficult. But all are not the same -- there are also kind ones who say a decent amount but they are rare."

According to traffic police data, nearly 942 cases have been booked this year against drivers for demanding excess fares. The numbers show a rising trend over the years, with 1,599 cases reported in 2023, increasing to 3,136 in 2024, and climbing to 4,023 cases in 2025.

Several social media reels have spotlighted the unequal treatment meted out to outsiders including foreigners and non-Kannada speakers by autorickshaw drivers, sparking debate over language bias and fare discrimination. Influencers conducting social experiments have shown that for the same route, Hindi-speaking passengers are often quoted higher fares, while Kannada-speaking locals are offered lower rates near ₹200. In some cases, non-Kannada speakers are even refused rides. Other videos highlight drivers demanding fares well above app-based rates, sometimes leading to arguments.

"Despite an increasing number of cases being booked, the problem of auto drivers refusing passengers and demanding excess fares continues daily. Many commuters tend to negotiate and move on instead of formally reporting the issue. The situation worsens during night hours, when travel options are limited. Autos play a crucial role in first- and last-mile connectivity, and aggregators should encourage more frequent, shorter trips rather than selective long-distance rides. While mechanisms exist to lodge complaints, the public must make greater use of them instead of paying extra and letting violations go unchecked. Unless accountability is strengthened across both offline and app-based services, commuters will continue to face harassment. Ultimately, strict adherence to meter-based fares must become the norm rather than the exception," said Vinod Jacob, a civic activist.

SCREEN ADDICTION

Busy with reels behind the wheels

Netizens debate need to spread awareness about distracted driving, even as doctors stress algorithm-driven content leads to dopamine spikes similar to gambling

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According to police data, 34,303 cases were registered between January and September 2025 against motorists for using mobile phones while driving

A social media user raised fresh concerns about road safety after recounting a troubling experience with an autorickshaw driver allegedly watching short videos on his phone while navigating busy city traffic. In a post shared on X, the user described the driver as being "locked in" to scrolling through clips for most of the journey, appearing largely inattentive to the road.

The situation turned dangerous when a truck ahead began reversing. The driver failed to react in time, forcing the passenger to shout a warning and the driver braking at the last moment. Minutes after this and despite the passenger's request to avoid watching videos, the auto driver was again scrolling through videos.

The user suggested the incident reflects a deeper issue. "I could see he is clearly addicted to it," the post said, raising questions about accountability and the growing influence of short-form video platforms on attention spans.

Experts say this behaviour is part of a increasingly common pattern. Divya Reddy, clinical psychologist at Fortis Hospital Bannerghatta Road, noted that addiction to reels and short-form content is becoming a psychological concern across age groups. "Short-form videos are designed to provide quick emotional rewards—humour, excitement, validation—which conditions the brain to seek instant gratification. Algorithm-driven content creates suspense and unpredictability, leading to dopamine spikes similar to gambling behaviour," she said. She explained that over time, people begin to reach for their phones automatically during moments of boredom, stress, or discomfort. "The issue is not just digital use, but the loss of mental rest. The brain doesn't get enough quiet time to process thoughts and emotions, which can lead to irritability, low frustration tolerance, and sleep disturbances," she added.

Reddy also pointed out that excessive consumption reduces a person's tolerance for silence and stillness. "The brain becomes used to constant stimulation, leading to restlessness, impatience, anxiety, and mood swings," she said.

Echoing similar concerns, Dr Sachin Baliga, Consultant Psychiatrist at the same hospital, said doctors are seeing cases of behavioural addiction linked to excessive screen time. "Every swipe delivers a small dopamine response. Over time, the brain starts craving constant novelty and struggles in its absence. Short-form content removes natural stopping cues, leading to what is commonly called 'doom-scrolling'," he explained. He added that studies have linked frequent consumption of such content with reduced attention spans, increased stress, and difficulty concentrating on tasks requiring sustained focus. "People report restlessness, irritability, sleep issues, and difficulty engaging in conversations or reading," he said.

Dr Baliga also drew a connection between digital habits and road safety. "Somewhere, the acceptability of using mobile phones for navigation while driving contributed to this shift. Earlier, even wearing earphones while driving invited fines. Now, we have people doom-scrolling while driving," he observed.

He added that reducing screen time, setting limits, and engaging in slower offline activities can help restore balance.

Commuters in the city too report discomfort with this addiction. "As passengers, you feel helpless in such situations," said a frequent autorickshaw user. "Even if you speak up, you don't know if the driver will stop. There needs to be stricter enforcement and maybe even a way to report such behaviour easily," he said.

The post has triggered renewed debate online, with many calling for stricter enforcement of traffic rules and greater awareness around distracted driving. According to police data, as many as 34,303 cases were registered between January and September 2025 against motorists for using mobile phones while driving.

Hooked to social media: US jury finds Instagram, YouTube liable

Meta and YouTube must pay millions in damages to a 20-year-old after a jury decided the social media giant and video streamer designed their platforms to hook young users without concern for their well being. The California jury's decision on Wednesday in a first-of-its-kind lawsuit could influence the outcome of thousands of similar lawsuits accusing social media companies of deliberately causing harm.

The plaintiff, known by her initials KGM, testified at trial that she became addicted to social media as a child and that this addiction exacerbated her mental health struggles. After more than 40 hours of deliberations, a majority of jurors agreed and awarded her $3 million in damages. Jurors later recommended an additional $3 million in punitive damages after deciding the companies acted with malice, oppression or fraud in harming children with their platforms. The judge has final say over how much damages are awarded.

It's the second verdict against Meta this week, after a jury in New Mexico determined the company harms children's mental health and safety, in violation of state law. Meta, the parent of Instagram and Facebook, and Google-owned YouTube issued statements disagreeing with the verdict and vowed to explore their legal options, which include appeals.

Google spokesperson Jose Castañeda said the verdict misrepresents YouTube "which is a responsibly built streaming platform, not a social media site." A Meta spokesperson said teen mental health is "profoundly complex and cannot be linked to a single app."

Peter Ormerod, an associate professor of law at Villanova University, called the verdict "a momentous development" but noted it's just "one step in a much longer saga" and that he doesn't expect to see large changes to the platforms immediately.

"I don't think it is an unequivocal victory and I think there's a long way to go before you see something akin to the master settlement that this is often analogised to in the tobacco and opioid litigation," he said. **–AP**

B'luru teens losing sleep over likes

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A growing dependence on smartphones is disrupting sleep patterns among teenagers in Bengaluru, with a majority of parents expressing concern over its long-term impact, according to a recent survey.

The study, conducted among 5,000 parents of children aged 12 to 18 across India, highlights an emerging public health concern: late-night screen use and its effect on sleep quality. While the issue spans multiple cities, Bengaluru presents a particularly worrying trend when it comes to bedtime device usage.

According to the survey conducted by COP (Child Online Protection), 53% of teenagers in Bengaluru use their phones after going to bed, indicating that screens are becoming a constant nighttime companion. This behaviour mirrors a broader national pattern, where 62% of parents reported that their teens sleep only after 11 pm, and one in three teens spends over two hours on screens after dinner.

The report notes that 68% of parents fear screen addiction is affecting their children's sleep quality, with concerns extending beyond fatigue to mental and social well-being. Key parental worries include sleep disturbances (22.72%), social isolation (22.44%), addiction (21.78%), and academic impact (21.78%).

Metro cities showed slightly higher awareness levels but similar behavioural patterns. The survey found that average screen time in metro cities stands at 5.61 hours daily, with over 88% of parents expressing concern. Non-metro cities, while reporting marginally higher screen time at 5.67 hours, also recorded greater concern levels at over 90%.

In Mumbai, 68% of teens sleep after 11 pm, while Delhi reports 66%. Additionally, nearly 46% of teens in Delhi wake up at night to check notifications.

Health professionals stress that disrupted sleep during adolescence can affect cognitive development, emotional regulation, and academic performance. Sandeep Kumar, founder of COP App, said, "Sleep is crucial for a teenager's mental development, emotional stability, and academic success. But smartphones have, in a way, added several hours to their bedtime. Many parents underestimate the impact late-night screen use has on teens' sleep patterns. Establishing screen-free bedtime routines and encouraging healthy digital habits is extremely important."

A paediatrician said late-night smartphone use is increasingly interfering with adolescents' natural sleep cycles. "Over time, this can lead to chronic sleep deprivation, affecting concentration, mood, and even academic performance."

BM Food & Night Life

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Five civic budgets debut, but accountability questions remain

Separate budgets by five city corporations aim to fix infrastructure gaps, but absence of elected representatives raises concerns over transparency, priorities, and delivery

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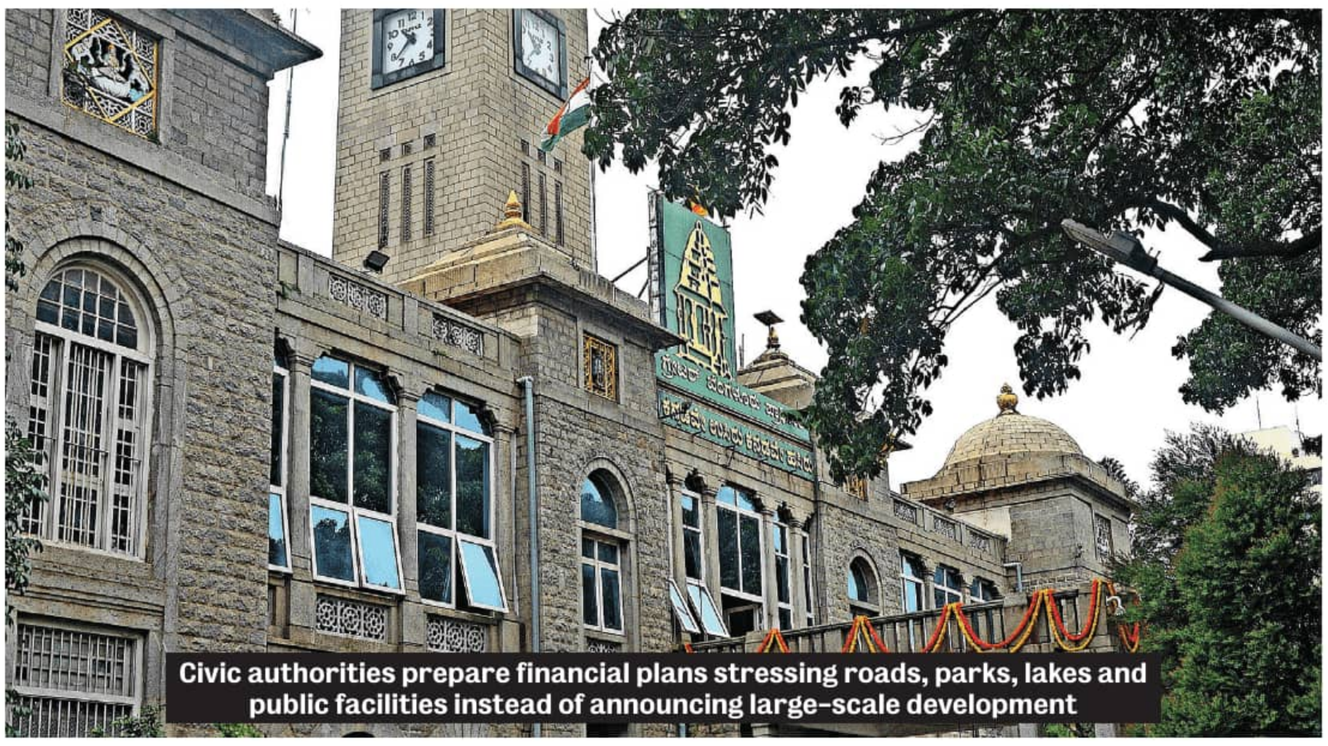

Civic authorities prepare financial plans stressing roads, parks, lakes and public facilities instead of announcing large-scale development

For the first time since the formation of the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA), five newly constituted city corporations are set to present their individual budgets for 2026–27, raising public expectations. Citizens expect these budgets to prioritise long-pending infrastructure needs and provide tangible solutions to Bengaluru's persistent traffic congestion. This will be the sixth consecutive budget without elected representatives, as the erstwhile BBMP was dissolved six years ago. In the absence of corporators, officials themselves have prepared the revenue and expenditure estimates, raising both curiosity and concern about accountability.

Unlike earlier years, when the city presented a single consolidated budget of around ₹19,000 crore, each of the five corporations will unveil separate budgets based on their jurisdiction and revenue capacity on March 27 and 28. Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar assured financial support to corporations facing resource constraints. "Five corporations of Bengaluru will present separate budgets with a well-structured plan. We have discussed this with legislators as well. Due to decentralisation, funds meant for one corporation will not be diverted elsewhere, and the government will support those facing financial shortages," he said.

With multiple corporations presenting independent financial plans for the first time, residents hope long-pending works finally move forward, even as many wonder whether officer-led decisions will truly improve everyday civic life

Officials expect the combined outlay of all five corporations to be between ₹15,000 crore and ₹16,000 crore, with heavy reliance on advertisement tax and premium FAR (Floor Area Ratio) charges. Instead of announcing large new projects, the corporations plan to focus on completing stalled works, which remains a major challenge. "Completing pending projects and strengthening basic infrastructure will be the immediate priority," a senior official said.

The corporations have already sought more than ₹8,500 crore from the state government for development works, although the state budget has not made a separate allocation so far. Officials say the government's assurance of financial aid has offered some relief. Given the financial constraints, the budgets will likely prioritise essential civic services such as roads, footpaths, lakes, parks, public toilets, and the maintenance of schools, colleges, and hospitals, while large-scale projects may take a backseat.

Bengaluru continues to face infrastructure gaps not only in core areas but also across 110 peripheral villages that have seen little development. Ashok K, a civic activist, said, "As the five corporations prepare to present their budgets at multiple venues across the city, the key question remains whether these financial plans will genuinely strengthen urban governance and deliver meaningful development outcomes."

29,000 youth trained in AI, robotics fields

Karnataka is emerging as a key hub for next-generation skills, with a growing number of youth training in cutting-edge sectors like artificial intelligence, semiconductors, robotics, and electronics manufacturing, reflecting India's broader push towards a future-ready workforce. According to data tabled in the Rajya Sabha, 29,147 candidates in Karnataka trained or received orientation in new-age job roles under the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY 4.0) between 2022-23 and December 2025. In addition, 14,202 candidates enrolled in related trades through the Craftsman Training Scheme during the same period.

The figures came in response to a question raised by GC Chandrashekhar and highlighted the Centre's focus on equipping youth with industry-relevant skills in fast-evolving sectors. These training programmes form part of the broader Skill India Mission, which aims to reskill and upskill the workforce through initiatives such as PMKVY, the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme, and the nationwide network of Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs). The government introduced specialised modules in artificial intelligence, robotics, and Industry 4.0 technologies to match industry demand and accelerate digital transformation. Training numbers increased, but the approach to placement tracking changed. Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Jayant Chaudhary said officials tracked placement outcomes only under earlier versions of PMKVY (1.0 to 3.0). Under PMKVY 4.0, the programme focuses on enabling candidates to explore diverse career pathways, including entrepreneurship and apprenticeships.

To bridge the gap between training and employment, the government launched the Skill India Digital Hub to connect trained candidates with jobs and apprenticeship opportunities. It also organises Kaushal Melas and Prime Minister's National Apprenticeship Melas to support hiring. The government set up 36 Sector Skill Councils led by industry stakeholders, and the Electronics Sector Skills Council of India works with MeitY and industry players to design courses linked to the India Semiconductor Mission and the PLI scheme to build a skilled workforce for the ESDM sector.

— BMB

Doordarshan serial selection sparks row among veteran Kannada film directors

National award-winning directors question transparency after selection committee chooses Mansore, alleging poor communication and lack of clarity in reviewing applications for Doordarshan daily serial

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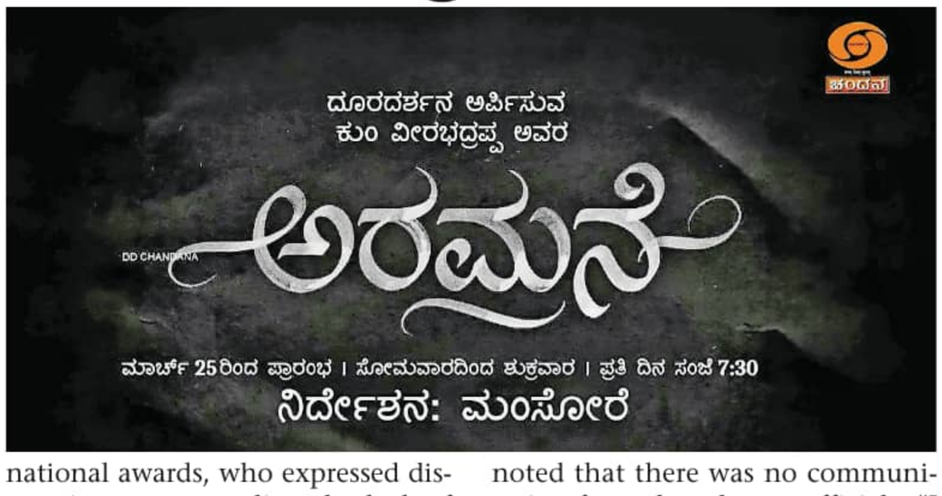

The process of reviewing applications by the selection committee formed by Doordarshan to make a daily serial has invited flak from veteran directors who are known for winning national awards and bringing name and fame for Karnataka. They said the selection committee or the Doordarshan authorities did not bother to communicate with the applicants.

It is believed that more than 15 veteran directors submitted applications in January, and they claimed that there was no one to inform them about the fate of their submissions. The three-member selection committee constituted by Doordarshan eventually selected director Mansore who won national awards for the Kannada movies Harivu and Nathicharami to direct the daily serial. Mansore opted to adapt Aramane, a historical novel written by Kum Veerabhadrappa.

Expressing concern over the lack of transparency in the process, Girish Kasaravalli, a veteran director who has won numerous national awards, said he was disappointed with the selection committee for ignoring his contribution to Kannada cinema. "It is for the selection committee to clear the doubts on how it zeroed in on director Mansore. I am not against him but do not like the way the selection committee has reviewed the applications submitted by national award-winning directors," said Kasaravalli.

The frustration is echoed by director P Sheshadri, a winner of eight national awards, who expressed disappointment regarding the lack of communication. He noted that he was asked to submit an application and suggest two titles just two days prior to the meeting. "I was out of station when I was told to submit my application. Later, I did not receive any information on whether my application was accepted or rejected," Sheshadri said.

NR Nanjunde Gowda, another national award winner, also blamed the authorities and the selection committee for a lack of transparency. He noted that there was no communication from the relevant officials. "I am of the opinion that the selection committee should have opted for a veteran director to make a daily serial for Doordarshan. I came to know that more than 15 directors have submitted applications but only six of them were asked to submit the titles. They did not ask me to submit the title of the novel that has to be adapted into a daily serial," Nanjunde Gowda said.

Director TS Nagabharana, who has won around 10 national awards, shared a similar opinion, stating that he also submitted an application but received no further word from the Doordarshan authorities.

However, Arathi HN, Head of Programme at Doordarshan Kendra (DD Chandana), maintained that the DD authorities played no role in the selection. "The selection committee's decision is final. We have followed the norms," she said.

Several senior Kannada filmmakers have criticised the selection process for Doordarshan's upcoming daily serial, claiming they were ignored despite applying, while the committee maintains rules were followed and director Mansore's selection was final

Meanwhile, director Mansore, who is assigned to make Aramane, said he was unaware of the controversy. "I submitted an application online for directing a tele serial. I got approval in two days," he said.

Protests planned after trans persons reject amended Bill

Bill passed without any consultation with community members, say protesters, who have approached President seeking its withdrawal

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File photo of a protest against the Transgender Amendment Bill 2026 at Freedom Park

IN FOCUS
Transgender persons' rights

The passing of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill 2026 in Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha earlier this week in a voice vote has triggered widespread concern among members of the transgender community, legal experts, and activists across the nation.

Activist Kalki Subramaniam, who was a notable member of the National Council for Transgender Persons, announced their resignation by sharing a letter on social media. A Supreme Court appointed panel headed by Justice Asha Menon formed to strengthen transgender rights raised objections to the bill and recommended its withdrawal.

Community members across the country have indicated that they will be approaching the Supreme Court once the bill receives Presidential assent. According to legal experts, the challenge is likely to centre on the violation of fundamental rights, especially the right to self identification which was earlier upheld in judicial rulings.The new Bill requires individual to be present before the District Magistrate and a Medical Board to attain a certificate which decides their gender, based on biological parameters.

An activist from National Network for Gender and Sexual Minorities (NNGSM) told BM, "How is it possible to pass a bill regarding transgenders without speaking to them? It directly affects our lives and we are the ones that are constantly ignored from conversations aimed at our lives," they said.

Under Section 7 of the amendment, a structured medical certification system is supported, and identity certificates will be issued based on recommendation from designated medical authorities. This raises concerns about confidentiality of medical information.

Many members of the transgender community have raised their voice on social media to reject the bill. Some spoke about suffocation of being in environments where the dignity of individuals is ignored and questioned, apart from being stripped away now.

An amendment in Section 18 says punishments will be imposed on persons who abduct adults and cause them to undergo hormonal or surgical procedures with the intent to impose a transgender identity without consent. This will see a minimum of 10 years in jail and a fine of Rs 2 lakh. In cases involving children, the accused will face rigorous imprisonment for life with a fine of Rs 5 lakh.

Since both the sections include the term 'undue influence', social activists warn against its wide use due to the prevailing societal stereotypes tied to transgender persons. They also share that the amendment can reduce access to employment opportunities, healthcare, welfare schemes and education, which is already difficult to get.

Members of the transwomen, transmen, intersex and gender diverse communities, along with concerned citizens, have written to the President Droupadi Murmu, citing that the provisions under the bill as vague, punitive or open to misuse be withdrawn or revised in line with constitutional safeguards. Bengaluru has seen protests into the matter on a regular basis, with the next one planned for Saturday, conducted on behalf of the Movement of Gender and Sexual Pluralism.

Indian among 2 killed in UAE in debris crash

WAR UPDATES

At least two persons, including an Indian, were killed and three others injured on Thursday when debris of missiles intercepted by the UAE's air defence system fell on a street in Abu Dhabi, local media reported.

The second person killed in the incident is a Pakistani national, while the three injured also include an Indian, Abu Dhabi Media Office reported. UAE's air defences are responding to incoming missile and drone threats from Iran at regular intervals, according to the Ministry of Defence of the United Arab Emirates. "Abu Dhabi authorities have responded to an incident involving falling debris in Sweihan street, following the successful interception of a ballistic missile by air defence systems," Abu Dhabi Media Office posted on social media. "The incident has resulted in the deaths of two individuals of Pakistani and Indian nationality," it added. -PTI

Turbulence in the air

Indian airlines are set to operate a little over 23,000 weekly domestic flights during the summer schedule starting from March 29, which is 10% less than the services flown during the same period a year ago.

Aviation watchdog DGCA has published the domestic flights summer schedule, which is from March 29 to October 24, for nine scheduled airlines.

A DGCA official on Thursday told PTI that the airlines would be operating around 10% fewer flights in 2026 summer schedule compared to the previous summer schedule.

During the 2025 summer schedule, there were 25,610 weekly flights and this time, a 10 per cent reduction would mean the number of services will come down by 2,561. Accordingly, the total count will be about 23,049 weekly flights, as per an analysis.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has put out the airline-wise domestic summer schedule for 2026 on its website but has not provided a consolidated figure. -PTI

CRIMEFILE

Lecturer booked for sexual harassment

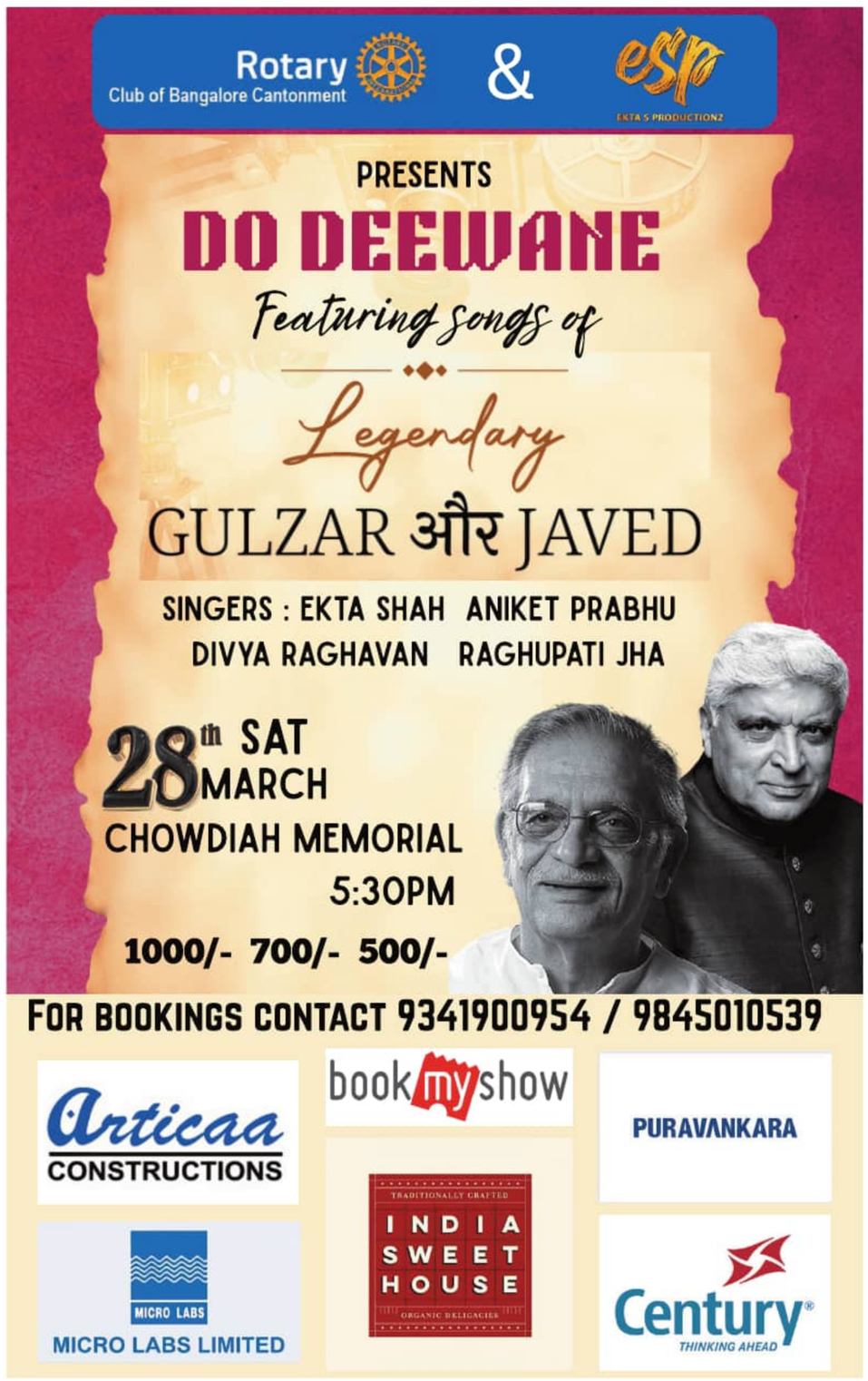
Tension briefly prevailed at Medical College after a group of students allegedly assaulted an assistant professor of Microbiology following an incident of alleged sexual harassment of a female student. The Nelamangala police have registered a case afainst the lecturer. The complaint was lodged by Devakar SV, a professor at the institution, against Abdul Rahman Shariff. Police said the incident occurred on March 23 the lecturer allegedly approached a student during class hours, offered her a chocolate, and proposed to her. Students later chased and assaulted the lecturer. -BMB

Inspector faces corruption charges

Serious allegations of corruption and misconduct have been levelled against Puttenahalli Police Inspector HK Ravikumar, with a group of sub-inspectors and station staff submitting a detailed complaint to the Governor's office
In the complaint, the staff have accused the inspector of running an bribery network within the police station, claiming money was collected from various sources including bars, pubs, restaurants, spas, vendors, and construction firms. The letter alleges that as much as 25 lakh was being collected every month, amounting to nearly 4.5 crore over two-and-a-half years. -BMB

Affair row: Minor stabs woman, her brother to death

A 16-year-old boy has been detained for allegedly stabbing a woman and her brother to death following a dispute over an alleged extramarital relationship in Peenya police station limits on Thursday.
The victims, Yamuna (36) and her brother Sudeep (34), were attacked at a residence near Peenya on Thursday morning. Police said the accused is the minor son of the woman, who was allegedly involved in a relationship with Yamuna's husband, Mallegowda.
According to Mallegowda's complaint, suspicions over his alleged relationship had led to disputes within his family. On Thursday, Yamuna and Sudeep went to confront the woman at her residence near Peenya. During a heated argument between the two families, the woman's son allegedly attacked the duo with a knife, inflicting multiple stab injuries. Both victims died on the spot. Mallegowda, who rushed to the house, found the bodies. The couple's son alleged that the accused had called his mother and uncle to the house with the motive of attacking them. -BMB



Forest Dept action delayed, complain apartment residents

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

20 days after their request to rescue the primate was ignored by the forest department.

"It has been 20+ days, and we have not received much help from the forest department. Now we are considering it (the monkey) as a resident with freedom to use all amenities," said the post.

Officials from the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) say they have been receiving calls from citizens to rescue monkeys.

However, GBA can only handle and rescue injured animals. Rescue of healthy wildlife requires certain SOPs and protocols to be followed. Thus, it becomes the responsibility of the Karnataka Forest Department.

"GBA received calls from residents of Whitefield regarding a stray monkey, and the request was sent to the state forest department," said a GBA official.

Experts say that monkeys enter apartment complexes and housing societies due to easy availability of food.

According to Dr. (Colonel) Nawaz Shariff, chief veterinarian at PFA Wildlife Hospital, "Some residents of these apartment complexes and housing societies feed the monkeys. Unattended and unscientific disposal of garbage is another source of food. There can also be fruit trees in the surrounding area that may invite monkeys. We have been advising the residents not to feed the wildlife. Monkeys are not domestic animals. In the absence of food, they will move away on their own," said Dr. (Colonel) Shariff.

Wildlife experts say feeding monkeys is not just harmful for humans, but it also impacts monkeys negatively. Overdose of high-calorie and low-fiber food can lead to various health issues in primates.

"While citizens expect the forest department or wildlife rescuers from NGOs to capture the monkeys and relocate them to a safe environment, it is not an easy feat. Darting a monkey can be a tedious task. Moreover, carrying out such an operation in an urban setup also poses other risks. The best way to manage the situation is to stop feeding them. Wildlife is supposed to be in a forest. If citizens do not feed them, they will move away," said a wildlife expert.

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I, IRFANA SAMEER KHAN, R/a.157,Shivaji Road, Shivajinagar, Bengaluru-51. I, have Changed my name to IRFANA, Vide affidavit, dated 25/03/2026 sworn before Notary G Dayananda Bangalore

I, Jagadish Channapura Rudrappa S/o Rudrappa R/o 54 near Anjaneya Swamy Temple Nellukunte, Bettahalsur, Bengaluru 562157 have changed my name to Jagadeesh Channapura Rudrappa.

I, Hazarilal S/o Magaru Nishad, residing at #20A, Swetha Varaha layout, padmeshwari nagar, Medahalli, Bangalore, have changed my name to Hazarilal Nishad.

I, Ajaz Ahmed Abdul Rasool S/o Abdul Rasool R/o No 31, 1st Main ,3rd Cross Tank Side Road ,near Husna Majid, Srk Garden, Bengaluru - 560041 Have Cahnged My Name to Ajaz Ahmed for All Purpoese

I, ZEENATH KOUSAR AMEER KHAN, R/a .10/B, G Floor, Bhoopsandra, Bengaluru- 94. I, have Changed my name to ZEENATH KOUSAR, Vide affidavit, dated 24/03/2026 Sworn before Notary: S.Samuel Solomon. Bangalore

I, Kasmani Shaheen Rafiq Mod Sidik R/o Flat No 006 Hmj Residency Coconut Garden Street, Prashanth Nagar T Dasarahalli, Bengaluru, 560057 Have changed my name to Shaheen Vanjara for All Purposes.

I, Sourajit Seal, S/o Sandip Seal, R/o Door No. 303, 4th Floor, Sai Kalyan Homes, Nagappa Reddy Layout, Kaggadasapura, C. V. Raman Nagar Post, Bangalore, Karnataka – 560093, hereby declare that I have changed my name from Saurajit Seal to SOURAJIT SEAL for all purposes.

I, KOUSER NASEEM, Residing at No 24, 4th Cross, 9th A Main, BTM Layout 1st Stage, Bangalore-560029, Have changed my name to RESHMA KOUSAR vide affidavit dated 26/03/2026 sworn before Notary Aravind Patil G.G Bangalore

I, USHA DHARMAPURI NAGARAJARAO, residing at No. 1652, Padmalaya, BSK 6th Stage, 4th Block, Lingadheeranahalli, Thalaghattapura, Bengaluru, Karnataka 560109. Do hereby solemnly affirm and declare as under, I have changed my name to USHA BALAJI vide affidavit dated : 24/03/2026 Before Notary S R Thulasikrishna

I, AJAZ SHARIFF, R/a. 15/31,1st Main, 2nd Cross, SRK Garden, Changaiah Compound, Tilaknagar, Bengaluru-41. in my education document my name was mention EJAZ SHARIEF. I further state that both name i.e. AJAZ SHARIFF and EJAZ SHARIEF. the both name belongs to me only. Vide affidavit, dated 05/03/2026 Sworn before Notary: Bhagya Kumari.N. Bangalore

LOST & FOUND

Change of Name

We, Ashish Kumar and Sushmita Suman, r/at A-306, Saibya Sterling, Hosapalya Main Road, HSR Layout, Bangalore 560068 have changed our minor daughter's name from Aadya Arushi to Ishika Aadya for all purposes vide affidavit dt. 21.02.2026 sworn before Notary Dharani P, Bangalore.

SMT. Govindamma and Sri. Late Ranganathan r/o No. 24, 1st main, Canara bank colony, Uttarahalli, opposite Shanthi sagar hotel, Bangalore have lost my property/ site document bearing identification: Bangalore north tq, dasanapur hobli, Totadaguddadahalli village, survey no. 3/1A khata no-322, site no. 71 with FIR NO - 2124733/ 2026 BANGALORE. Finder pl. Contact MOBILE - 7760374929

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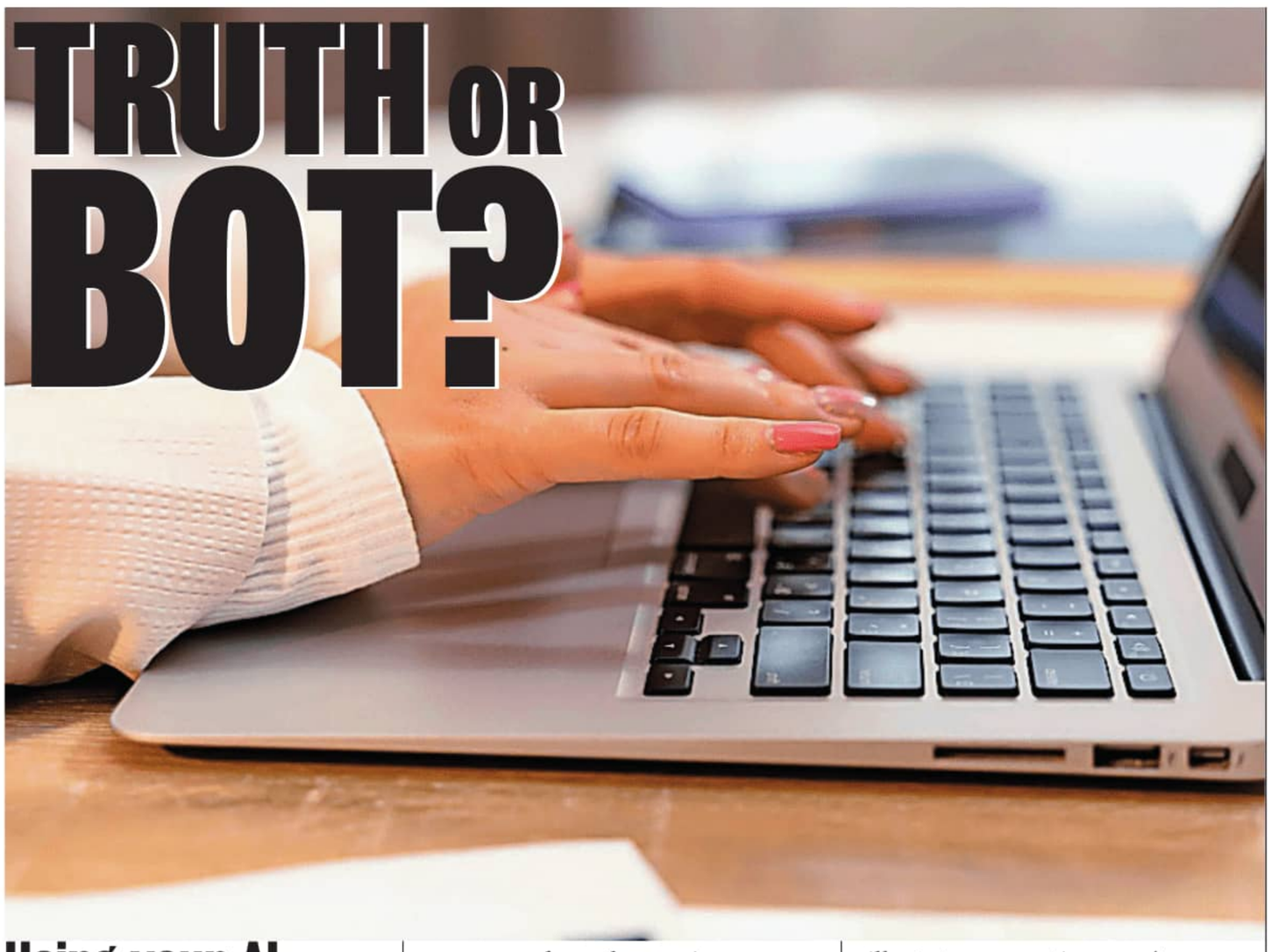


TRUTH OR BOT?

Using your AI chatbot as a search engine? Be careful what you believe

During the first world war, the British government was looking for ways to help people stretch their limited food supplies.

It found pamphlets from a noted 19th-century herbalist who said rhubarb leaves could be used as a vegetable along with the stalks.

The government duly printed its own pamphlets advising people to eat rhubarb leaves as a salad rather than throwing them out. There was one problem: rhubarb leaves can be poisonous. People reportedly died or became ill.

The advice was corrected and the pamphlets pulled from circulation. But during the second world war, the government was again looking for ways to stretch food supplies.

It found a stockpile of old resources from the previous war that explained unorthodox sources of food, including rhubarb leaves. Reusing the pamphlets seemed an efficient thing to do, so they were sent out to the public.

Once again, people reportedly died or became ill.

Those pamphlets were misinformation, but the public had no reason to suspect them either time. They were official resources developed by the government, why wouldn't they be safe?

That is how misinformation can cause problems even after the initial error is corrected. And the moral of the story still reverberates in the age of generative artificial intelligence (AI).

Chatbots are not search engines

Generative AI is used to generate text and images (and other forms of data) based on original information it has ingested.

But it can also be an engine for churning out misinformation faster than people can produce safe information, let alone fact-check and correct it.

And as the rhubarb story illustrates, corrections can't always properly remove the original contamination.

AI platforms such as ChatGPT and Claude don't work like a conventional search engine. But people use them as one because they seem to summarise complex topics quickly and require fewer clicks than conventional internet searches.

Search engines rely on articles and text about a given topic, and then weigh how reliable those articles are.

Generative AI instead relies on huge bodies of text, from which it measures the odds of words appearing next to each other.

These "large language models" are purely looking to generate reasonable-looking sentences, rather than accurate ones.

For example, if "green eggs and ham" appeared frequently enough in its huge pile of words, it is more likely to describe "eggs and ham" as green if someone asks.

'Plausible yet incorrect'

OpenAI, which developed ChatGPT, has admitted (based on its own study) there's no way to stop false information being presented as truth due to the way generative AI works. Explaining why large language models "hallucinate," the researchers wrote:

"Like students facing hard exam questions, large language models sometimes guess when uncertain, producing plausible yet incorrect statements instead of admitting uncertainty."

This can have real-world consequences. One recent study showed ChatGPT failed to recognise a medical emergency in more than half of cases.

This can be exacerbated by already existing errors in medical records, which a UK inquiry in 2025 found affected up to one in four patients.

While a doctor might order more tests to confirm a diagnosis, one researcher explained that generative AI "delivers the wrong answer with the exact same confidence as the right one".

The problem, as another scientist noted, is that generative AI "finds and mimics patterns of words." Being right or wrong is not really the point: "It was supposed to make a sentence and it did."

Research has shown generative AI tools misrepresent the news 45 per cent of the time, no matter the language or geographic region. And there is now genuine concern about AI risking lives by generating non-existent hiking routes.

It's easy to make fun of generative AI when it advises people to eat rocks or hold toppings on a pizza base with glue.

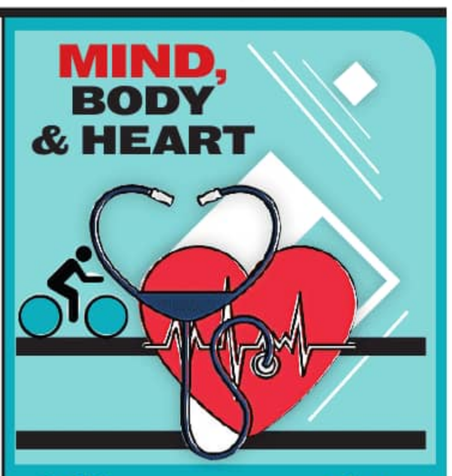
But other examples aren't so amusing, such as the supermarket meal planner that suggested a recipe that would produce chlorine gas, or the dietary advice that left someone with chronic toxic exposure to bromide.

Look for older information

Education and establishing good rules around the appropriate and cautious use of generative AI will be essential, especially as it makes inroads into governments, bureaucracies and complex organisations.

One safeguard is to try to source more reliable information produced before AI-contaminated text and imagery infiltrated the internet.

(By Kevin Veale, Massey University, The Conversation)



All you need to know about...

Typhoid

Antibiotic-resistant typhoid infections accounted for at least 87 per cent of India's disease-related economic burden in 2023, according to a study in The Lancet Regional Health Southeast Asia.
The total economic burden due to typhoid fever was estimated at Rs 123 billion.

Economic impact
Children under the age of 10 incurred the highest economic burden, contributing to over half of the costs, researchers, including those from London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and Christian Medical College in Vellore, found.
They also estimated that households bore 91 per cent of expenses, and 70,000 families faced "catastrophic" health expenditure.
Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh (including Telangana), Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal were estimated to account for 51 per cent of the national costs.

Typhoid burden
Typhoid fever is an infectious disease commonly transmitted through contaminated food or water. Symptoms can include high fever, fatigue, headache and stomach pain.
The authors said the findings provide key evidence to support the introduction of the typhoid conjugate vaccine in the national immunisation schedule, which is under consideration.

Antibiotic resistance
Evidence from the study also supports enhancing antibiotic resistance control and guiding national health financing policies, they said.
"Typhoid fever imposes a significant economic burden in India, shaped by fluoroquinolone resistance, children less than ten years of age, and high-burden provincial states of the country, resulting in considerable household financial strain," the authors wrote.
"Fluoroquinolone-resistant infections accounted for 87 per cent of total costs," they said. —PTI

MIRRORLIGHTS

Study finds high consumption of ultra-processed foods linked with reduced fertility in men

A new study suggests that consuming higher amounts of ultra-processed foods may be linked to reduced fertility in men, slower growth in early embryos, and smaller yolk sacs – essential for early embryonic development.

"Even though ultra-processed foods (UPFs) are so common in our diets, very little is known about their potential relationship with fertility outcomes, and early human development," said lead researcher Dr Romy Gaillard, a paediatrician and associate professor of developmental epidemiology at Erasmus University Medical Centre, Rotterdam, The Netherlands.

Researchers said until now no study has investigated the combined impact of both parents' ultra-processed foods (UPF) consumption on the length of time it takes to conceive and early embryonic development.

The study, published in the journal Human Reproduction, looked at 831 women and 651 male partners enrolled in a population-based, prospective study that has been following parents from before conception and into their offspring's childhood – the Generation R Study Next Programme.

The couples were included in the study during pre-conception period or during pregnancy between 2017 and 2021. Information on the parents' diet and time to pregnancy were measured using questionnaires.

"In men, we observed that (a) higher UPF consumption was related to a higher risk of subfertility and a longer duration until pregnancy was achieved, but not with early embryo development," the first author said.

Gaillard suggested that a diet low in UPFs would be best for both partners, not only for their own health, but also for their chances of pregnancy and the healthy development of the unborn child. —PTI

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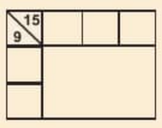
SOLVE IT IN A MINUTE

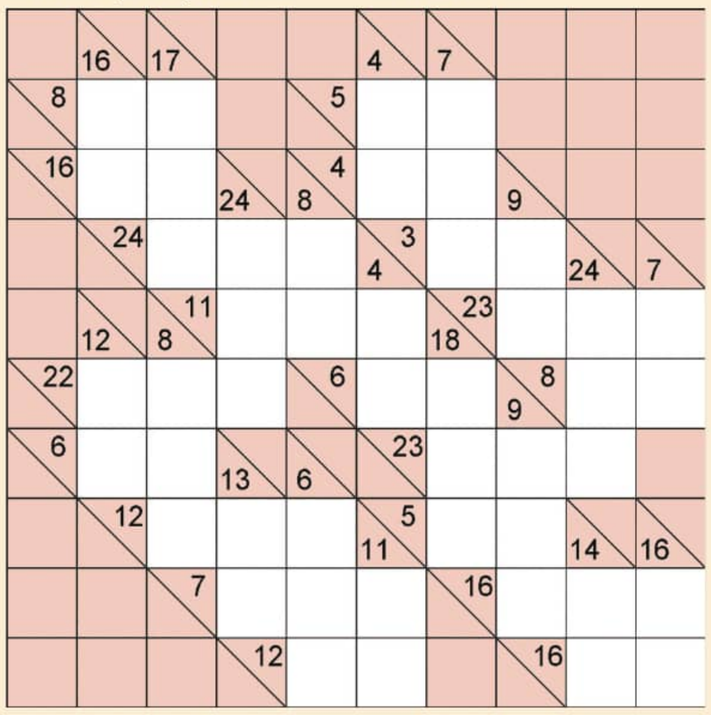
$7\sqrt{8} \times (2 / (7\sqrt{2})) = ?$

Kakuro

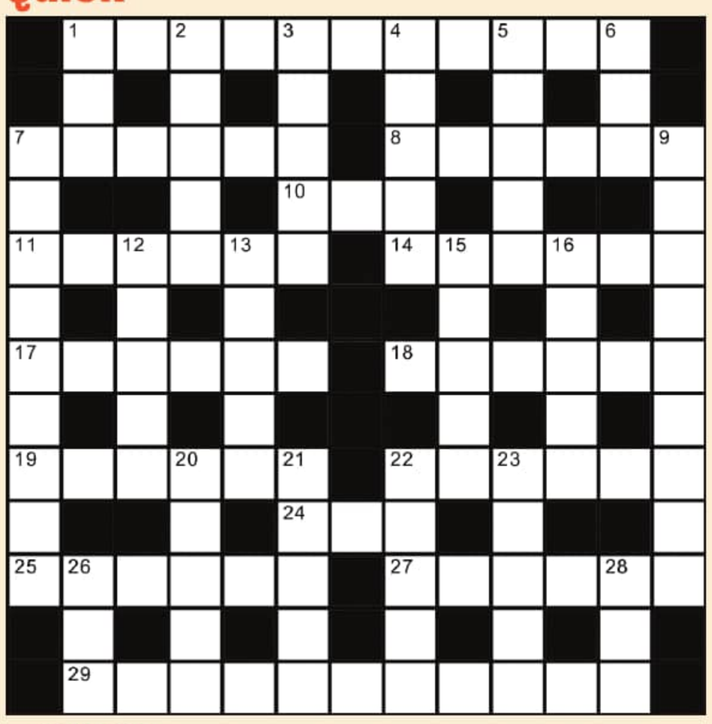
The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.



Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



Quick



ACROSS

1 Sending off to a destination (11)
7 Jolly (6)
8 Eye part (6)
10 Organ of sight (3)
11 Pulled or tugged sharply (6)
14 Attaching by stitches (6)
17 He is a ____ : he is a person of no importance? (6)
18 Spanish wine shop (6)
19 Intermittent hot spring? (6)
22 Ms Shetty of Bollywood (6)
24 Root vegetable (3)
25 Took it easy (6)
27 Most distant point (6)
29 Performed with restraint (11)

DOWN

1 Pair (3)
2 Smooth in a slippery way (5)
3 Was unwell or was sick (5)
4 Worries (5)
5 Under one's guidance, in a way? (2,3)
6 Firearm (3)
7 Area home to the City Central Library (9)
9 Make worse (9)
12 In a brave or courageous manner (5)
13 Supply with (a quality) (5)
15 An era (5)
16 Just right (5)
20 Filled to satisfaction (5)
21 Golfing trophy: ___ Cup (5)
22 Limited in size (5)
23 Situation which are opposite of what was intended (5)
26 Old French coin (3)
28 Farthest limit (3)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: T EQUALS D

RH'Y I YVISSLQ SRCU HVIH TLUYA'H WRJU I GUZYLA I CUQ YNIZY.

Linemaro

Is your name Charity? Because my heart is racing for you

Mindchow

Knowledge is proud that it knows so much; wisdom is humble that it knows no more

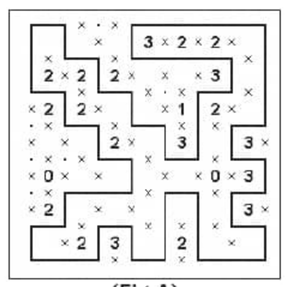
Joke of the day

Home: A place where a man goes to raise a fuss because something went wrong at the office

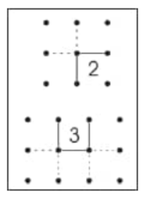
Loop

Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.



(Fig A)

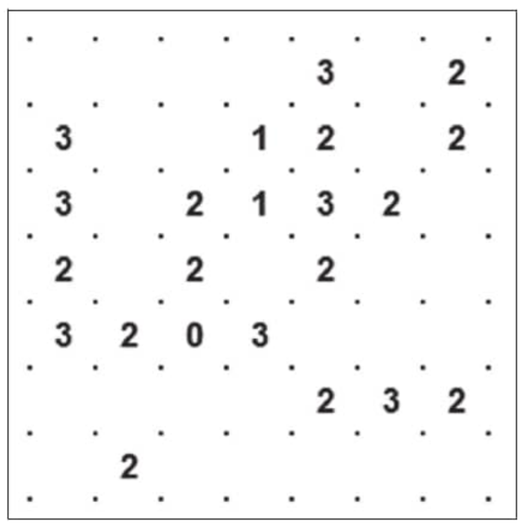


(Fig B) Not Allowed

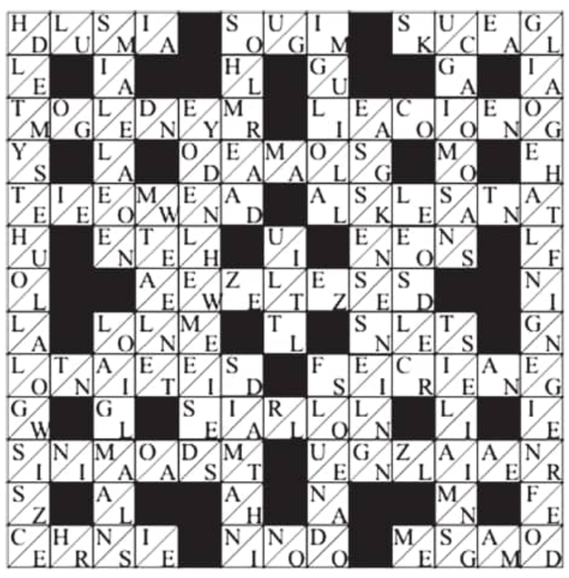
How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)



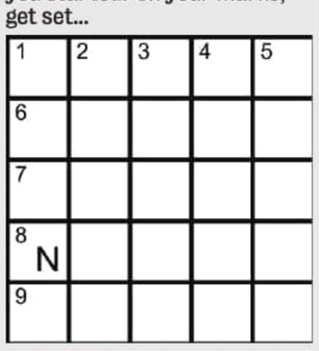
Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...



ACROSS

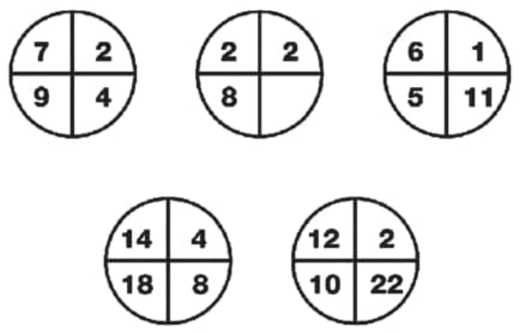
1 So bit; 6 Di-air; 7 Any is; 8 Snook; 9 Gusty

DOWN

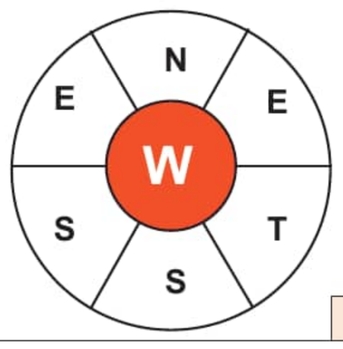
1 Organ; 2 A buoy; 3 It Ido; 4 Stink; 5 Sy sis

Mensapuzzle

Which number is missing?



Bull's eye



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

05 Average; **06** Good; **08** Outstanding

SudokuChallenge

		1	7		5			
8	4		2				3	9
5		6						2
6		2						
			6		8			
						1		5
3						2		7
2	7				4		9	8
			8		7	3		

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.

Easy = 6

2 5 5 4

Medium = 14

5 7 9 3

Hard = 4

2 2 3 3

Hocusfocus

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

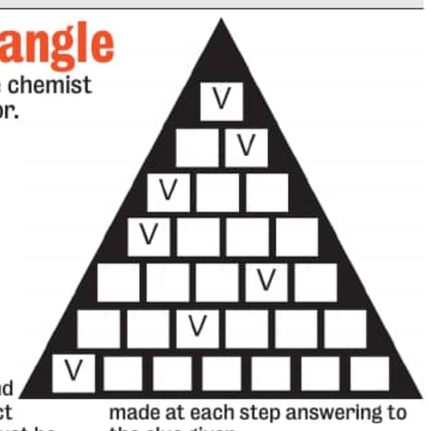
Differences: 1. Shovel is not as wide. 2. Car tire is moved. 3. Curtain is missing. 4. Shelf is longer. 5. Car window is smaller. 6. Garage door is not showing.

Riddler

I am word with six letters. My motto is together as one. If you remove my first and second letters, you can wear me. If you remove my third letter I can be painful. If you remove my second, third and sixth letters, Adam & Eve did it. If you remove my second and third letters, you do this using your mouth. What am I?

Alpha triangle

1 Vanadium for the chemist
2 Audio-visual, abbr.
3 Goods vehicle
4 Conceited
5 Unsophisticated
6 Yielded (4,2)
7 Oenological year

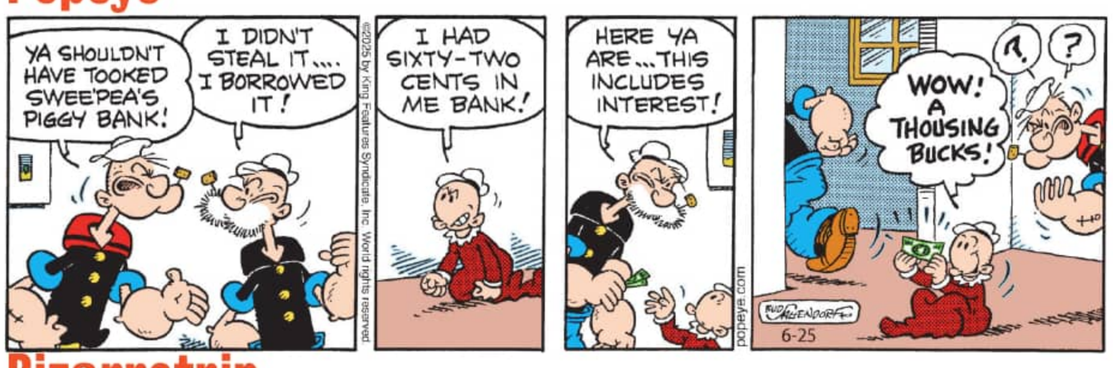


Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE »

COMICS

Popeye



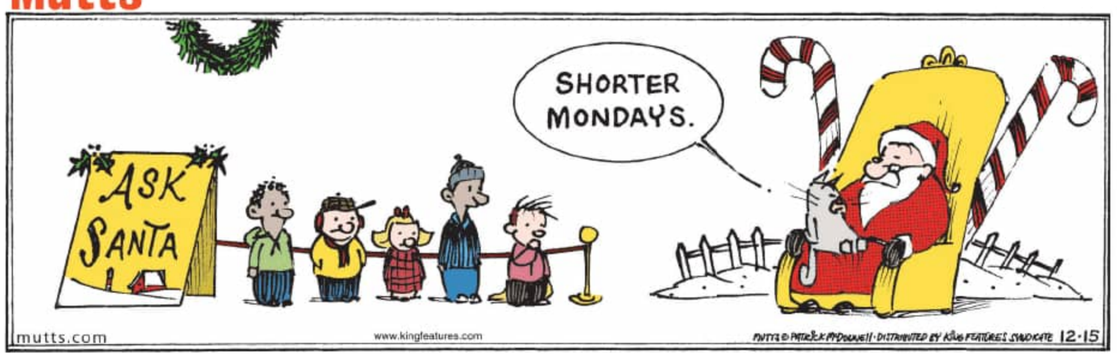
Bizarrotrip

Diamond Lil

Hart of the city

Crankshaft

Mutts



WRITTEN IN THE STARS

DR SUNDEEP KOCHAR

If it's your birthday today

Insight shapes your choices. Love feels thoughtful and intuitive. Career clarity comes through quiet reflection. Financial decisions benefit from careful evaluation. Travel offers moments of solitude and inspiration. Home feels serene and protective. Trusting your inner wisdom helps you move gently yet confidently toward goals that truly resonate.

Aries Mar 21 – Apr 20

You won't tolerate false talk about you. Though usually kind, today requires firmness. Show strength, defend yourself clearly, and ensure others understand you won't accept lies or disrespect.

Taurus Apr 21 – May 20

A revelation about a friend shocks you, yet signs existed before. Accept what you observe next time instead of ignoring evidence, and trust your perceptions more honestly going forward.

Gemini May 21 – Jun 21

This isn't the moment for drastic career changes. Maintain current direction, observe quietly, and trust that clarity will arrive later when action becomes truly appropriate and beneficial.

Cancer Jun 22 – July 23

Sudden clarity solves a long-standing puzzle today. The answer seems obvious in hindsight, so don't criticize yourself. Many overlook simple truths before insight finally clicks.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23

A financial concern resolves better if left alone. Interfering now may complicate matters unnecessarily, so practice patience and allow the situation to stabilize naturally without forced adjustments.

Virgo Aug 24 – Sep 23

Prioritise harmony in every interaction today. Kindness spreads quickly; offering warmth and goodwill encourages others to respond positively, creating smoother connections everywhere you go.

Libra Sep 24 – Oct 22

A past error resurfaces, requiring correction. It's minor but can't be ignored. Retrace steps, make adjustments calmly, and restore balance before moving forward confidently again.

Scorpio Oct 23 – Nov 22

Your passion for a project has cooled temporarily. Let it rest. Distance allows clarity, and returning later with fresh energy will improve results significantly.

Sagittarius Nov 23 – Dec 22

Anyone pressuring you today meets resistance. Stand firm, defend your autonomy, and make it clear you won't be coerced into choices that don't align with your will.

Capricorn Dec 23 – Jan 20

Avoiding emotional issues won't solve them. Face facts directly, decide your next steps, and apply practical thinking to restore stability and emotional order.

Aquarius Jan 21 – Feb 19

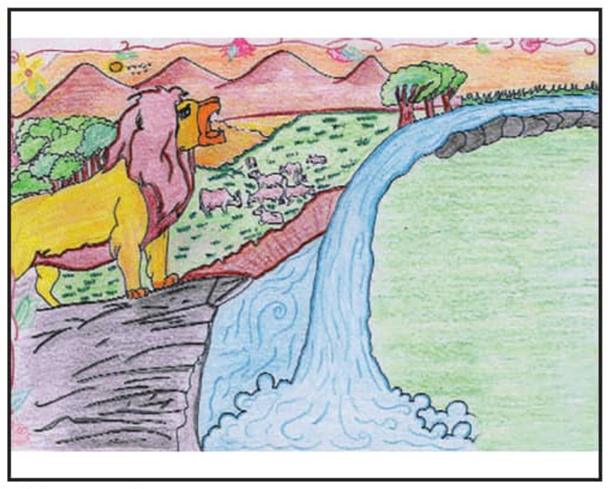
Reality reveals spending limits were misjudged. Adjust finances now, reduce generosity toward others, and focus on restoring balance without resentment or denial.

Pisces Feb 20 – Mar 20

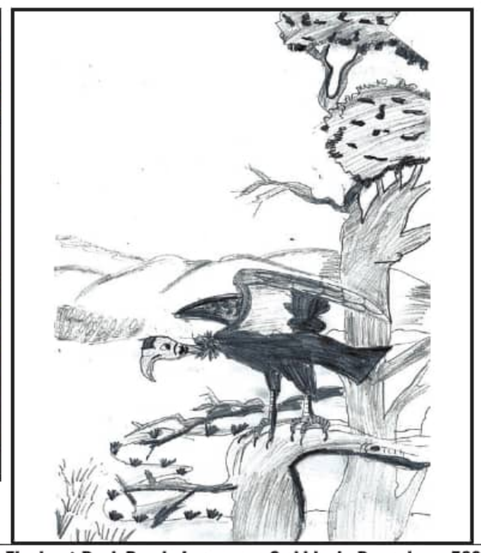
If progress stalls completely, reassess your approach. Something's off. Reflect honestly, identify missteps, reset intentions, and begin again with wiser direction.

www.sundeepkochar.com

KIDZONE



Krishna, Bengaluru



Ananya, Bengaluru

Kidzone, Bangalore Mirror, No. 74/2, Sanjana Plaza, 4th & 5th Floor, Elephant Rock Road, Jayanagar 3rd block, Bengaluru-560 011;
Please send hard copies of your artwork in A4 size only.

SOLUTIONS

SOLVE IN 1M = (14√8) / 7√2 = (14(2√2) / (7√2) = (28√2) / (7√2) = 4

RIDDLER String. A string ties objects together. You wear a ring, a sting hurts, according to the Bible, Adam & Eve committed a sin and you sing with your mouth.

BULL'S EYE newest, nwet, sewn, stew, sweet, went, west, WETNESS

STRIKE OUT

D	U	M	A	■	S	U	M	■	K	C	A	L	■	■
E	■	A	■	H	■	U	■	L	A	C	I	N	G	■
M	O	L	D	E	R	■	L	A	S	■	M	■	H	■
Z	■	A	■	N	■	■	N	■	■	A	■	I	■	■
I	N	M	O	S	T	■	U	G	L	I	E	R	■	■
G	■	L	■	S	A	L	O	N	■	L	■	E	■	■
O	T	I	T	I	S	■	F	I	R	I	N	G	■	■
L	■	O	N	E	■	L	■	S	E	T	■	N	■	■
H	■	E	E	L	■	I	■	E	S	■	O	N	■	F
O	■	A	W	E	L	E	S	S	■	■	■	I	■	■
T	E	M	E	D	■	A	S	L	A	N	T	■	■	■
Y	■	L	■	D	E	A	L	S	■	M	■	H	■	■
M	O	L	D	E	R	■	L	A	C	I	N	G	■	■
E	■	A	■	H	■	U	■	■	A	■	I	■	■	■
Z	■	A	■	N	■	■	N	■	■	N	■	E

 # Potter on

'Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone' teaser released, series to premiere on Christmas 2026

Style on point

Ananya Panday's new short hair with soft front bangs got everyone's attention when she first showed it. The actress posted her cool new look on social media a few days ago, and fans love it. Her fresh style has got lots of praise and looks like Hollywood stars, and she rocks it easily.

The actress turned heads even more at The Hollywood Reporter India's Women In Entertainment event at Mumbai's Fairmont Hotel on Wednesday. She went in, smiled warmly for the photographers for a short time, then stepped away and waved goodbye. The actress walked on the red carpet in a grey midi dress. The strapless dress had a strong V-neck top and soft folds at the waist that nicely showed her shape. She matched it with simple black heels, a big ring, and hanging earrings.

Yet, her hairstyle truly commanded attention. She let her hair fall loosely with a center part, shaped into gentle natural waves, ensuring her fresh bangs stayed front and center. For the evening, she finished the look with sharp, darkened brows, mascara-heavy lashes, a light blush on her cheeks, and glossy brownish-pink lips. The viral photos ignited Hollywood comparisons, especially to Dakota Johnson. One fan gushed, "She looks like Dakota Johnson in this look." Another declared, "She gives Hollywood actresses vibes!! FACECARD." A user pointed out, "She's lookin like @dakotajohnson." Meanwhile, someone hailed Ananya as a "Natural beauty." On the work front, Ananya is all set to be seen as the titular character in the second season of Prime Video's show, 'Call Me Bae'.

—ETimes

Kiara's 'chocolate' glam

New "mommy" and actress Kiara Advani turned heads with her latest chocolate-hued glam avatar, prompting an excited response from actress Alia Bhatt, who tagged her as "gorgeous".

Kiara took to Instagram on Thursday morning took to Instagram, where is seen dressed in a milk chocolate-toned, fitted corset-style dress, accentuating a sleek and glamorous silhouette. For the caption, she wrote: "Mommy's home! and she brought chocolate." The post quickly caught attention, with several fans and industry friends reacting to her striking look and confident vibe.

Among them, actress Alia couldn't hold back her admiration and dropped a comment saying, "Gorgeeeeeeee."

Kiara, who is married to actor Sidharth Malhotra, on July 2025 officially announced the arrival of their baby girl, admitting that their "world" has "forever changed."

— IANS

AMRITSAR ADVENTURE

PC shares glimpse of her trip to Punjab

Priyanka Chopra Jonas is all about traveling, having a good time, and keeping her fans updated through her social media handle.

The star recently took to her account to reveal her plans for the day in Amritsar!

Taking to her Insta account, she shared glimpses of herself at the airport and announced another adventure, this time in Amritsar, Punjab. She shared the news along with a photo of a digital map and the caption, "Chalo! Another adventure." She also shared a video of herself filming the farms and greenery from the window seat, along with the caption, "Off we go.. Another adventure." While the post went viral, it left many fans and netizens wondering what the actress is up to. She has not yet revealed any more details on her trip.

The actress has had quite a busy year since 2026 began. Recently, she appeared in the hit film, 'The Bluff,' which is available for viewing on different websites. Other than that, she is also starring in SS Rajamouli's 'Varanasi' opposite South Superstar Mahesh Babu.

On a personal note, the star regularly shares glimpses of her time as a family with longtime beau Nick Jonas and their sweet daughter, Malti. Last week, she shared glimpses from a simple drive that she and Jonas took. In the video, the actress can be seen chilling and enjoying the sunny day while Jonas drives the car around. She posted the sweet video to her account with the caption, "Mommy daddy days are my favorite."

—ETimes

SANDALWOOD SHOTS

Y MAHESWARA REDDY

Short film on Valmiki

Maharshi Valmiki, a 21-minute film, was released on the occasion of Sri Rama Navami. The movie revolves around how Ratnakara, a hunter, becomes Maharshi Valmiki after killing a bird. The incident transformed him into a sage who wrote the epic Ramayana. Praveen Shivanna jas directed the short film while Ratna Das has supported the movie.

The movie was screened at Chamundeshwari Studios on Tuesday. Suresh Urs, who won the national award for best editing, was the chief guest at the event and veteran character actor Ganesh Rao Kesarkar and Padmshree Venkatesh were also present on the occasion.

Shivanna said that he worked as an editor before but Maharshi Valmiki is his maiden movie as a director. "The movie was filmed in and around Chikmagalur. I thank the guests for gracing this memorable event in my life," said Shivanna.

Sujith Shetty plays the lead in the movie. "I have been trying for more than 14 years to get a chance to act in movies. I am very happy to realise my long-pending dream. I am fortunate to share the screen with veteran director-cum-actor Shivamani," said Shetty.

Actress Roopa Mutthu Rayappa said she was very happy to be part of the cast. Tanvik is the cinematographer.

Horror comedy

Cinematographer-cum-director PVR Swamy is elated about the release of his latest movie First Night With Devva. This is the fifth movie as director for PVR Swamy, known for the successful movie Rajatantra, and his 53rd as a cinematographer.

The movie's trailer was unveiled by veteran character actor Srinivasa Murthy at Renukamba Preview Theater on Wednesday. "Pratham is known for playing the talkative characters in movies but he does not have many dialogues in First Night With Devva. The shooting of the movie was completed in 30 days," said Swamy.

Pratham doubles up as script and screenplay writer for this movie.

"I am happy to share that the film's dubbing and satellite rights have been sold for a decent amount. This movie is a horror comedy. It revolves around a person who marries a woman and on their first night together, comes to know that his wife is a ghost," said Pratham.

Nikitha Swamy said that she plays a character with two shades in the film.

Mimicry Gopi recalled how PVR Swamy and Pratham made him work hard during the shooting.